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MONZA GT

GM Styling turns out a breathtaking idea car

THE SPIRITED, SPORTING-looking car pictured here and on this month's *Car Life* cover represents an idea, or rather, a whole concept, of a vehicle that might one day be for sale down at the local Chevrolet dealership. This very special Monza GT (for Grand Touring) stems from the Corvair idiom and, while it uses few actual production Corvair parts, the resemblance to the current product is marked. It is above all a logical, if only theoretical, progression from the vastly popular Corvair Monza coupe.

Ever since its announcement in mid-1960, the Corvair Monza has been the object of great enthusiasm. Where the plain-Jane Corvair coupes and sedans were slow to be accepted (and purchased) by the general public, the sportier, more luxurious Monza was

an immediate sensation. Subsequent sales proved a turning point in compact car marketing.

Following this trend toward more luxurious small cars, the Corvair itself has undergone a subtle metamorphosis. It no longer is considered an economy compact; its image more nearly parallels that of a true sports car (or perhaps we should say, a car for sports). Development of the Spyder options (turbo-supercharged engine, better suspension and brakes, more complete instrumentation) has helped promote this idea one step further by providing the Corvair with a bit more lively performance.

Even before the Spyder, numerous enthusiastic owners and tuners were warming up the air-cooled, opposed 6-cyl. engine



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either for more lively acceleration and performance or just for fun. They found the engines responsive to almost any treatment. Custom equipment makers discovered this burgeoning trend toward owner-enthusiasm, too, and the Corvair probably can now be equipped with a larger variety of pieces, parts and kits than any other American-built car.

Looking toward the future, when Corvair owners will possibly want something with even more pizzazz, the Styling Staff of General Motors Corporation has worked up an "idea" car with which to present some of its pertinent plans. As with past idea cars, there's no guarantee that any or all of its features will ever appear on

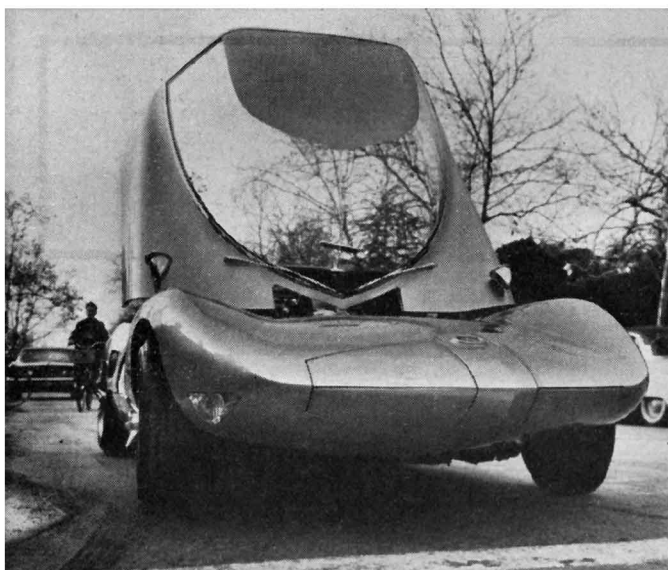
future vehicles, these things being determined at somewhat higher corporate level than styling. However, the Corvette, and its more recent Sting Ray model, began life as Styling and Engineering research/idea cars.

The Monza GT has ideas aplenty, enough to make any dyed-in-the-wool enthusiast turn (first) green with envy and (second) purple with frustration—at not being able to buy it. From its pointed knife-edged snout to its nipped-off tail it is aerodynamic to a fare-thee-well. The headlights are hidden behind clam-shell doors (which probably ruin those aerodynamics when they're open) at the front and the 2-place cockpit is covered by a Plexi- and fiberglass canopy which

combines windshield, doors and roof into one unit.

Ventilation is achieved through fresh-air ducts just at the base of the windshield and hinged rear quarter windows. Those Venetian-blind louvers at the rear window are adjustable from the cockpit and are supposed to control rearward vision and ventilation. (They'd be handy, closed up, to block off the high-beam lights of someone following immediately behind!)

The chassis is a deep-section platform with a Corvair engine mounted nearly amidships, ahead of the rear axle (à la racing Porsches and current Grand Prix car practice). The suspension is carried on tubular steel extensions, and is fully independent



front and rear. It operates via parallel A-arms at both ends and torsion bars are used as the springing medium, damped by conventional tubular shock absorbers. The rear wheels have a strong negative camber.

Air is ducted to the engine compartment through openings just in front of the rear wheels. More openings above these vent the rear brakes—discs on all four wheels. The engine is the familiar opposed 6-cyl. of the Corvair, but with somewhat larger displacement (possibly 180 cu. in.) and an experimental-type of carburetion. Horsepower figures are not available but a close estimate would be 140-150 bhp as the car can do an easy 120 mph. Transmission ratios are the

3.65—1st, 2.35—2nd, 1.44—3rd of the usual Corvair 4-speed while the differential ratio is 3.08:1. Access is provided by a huge hatch—the whole upper rear quarter hinges back to reveal the engine/transmission room.

The Monza cockpit was obviously designed to help the driver; the small diameter walnut-rimmed steering wheel is adjustable for both distance and angle and can be removed to facilitate entrance and exit from the driver's seat. Pedals are adjustable (the seat is stationary); the shift lever is mounted high and exactly where the right hand needs it. A nice little touch is the horn button—actually a lever, mounted vertically where the driver can "honk" with his right knee.

With a 92-in. wheelbase, a 53-in. track and an overall height of 42 in., the Monza GT is lower and smaller, but slightly longer, than most current sports cars. Its performance would surpass most of these while its physical appearance alone would be enough to sell it on a quantity basis.

At this date the Monza GT seems to be purely an experimental, idea-testing car. It has appeared publicly at several important sports car courses, notably Elkhart Lake, Watkins Glen, Riverside and Laguna Seca, and at the Art Center School in Los Angeles. Wherever it has been shown, the reaction of those who have seen it has been the same:

"Build it, we'll buy it." ■